

In the Claims

1. (currently amended) A method of retrieving product distribution information comprising:
 - (a) storing a plurality of agreements ~~from~~ in computer-accessible memory where each agreement identifies a buyer, a seller and a product to be provided from said seller to said buyer,
 - (b) retrieving a first agreement from said computer-accessible memory, wherein the first agreement comprises information that identifies a first entity as said buyer, a second entity as said seller, and a first product as said product,
 - (c) processing the information ~~stored~~ retrieved for the first agreement with a computer processor, wherein the processor determines whether a second agreement stored in the computer-accessible memory identifies the seller (second entity ?) in said first agreement as a buyer in said the second agreement, and determines whether the product in the second agreement relates to the product (first product ?) in the first agreement, and returns the identity of the second agreement depending on the result, and
 - (d) generating a product order pursuant to the identified second agreement.
2. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of storing a third agreement identifying the seller in the second agreement as a buyer in the third agreement, and where the product in the third agreement is related to the product in the second agreement.
3. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein said product is a stamp.
4. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the product in the first agreement is a first product, the product in the second agreement is a second product, and the first and second products are related if the first product is a part or all of a second product.
5. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein said product is a service or a product and a service.

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6. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said steps of storing agreement information further comprises storing the compensation which seller agrees to accept for said product from said buyer.
 7. (previously presented) The method of claim 6 wherein said compensation is the price of the product.
 8. (previously presented) The method of claim 7 wherein said compensation is a commission.
 9. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein said first entity is a class of entities.
 10. (previously presented) The method of claim 9 wherein said class is the general public.
 11. (currently amended) The method of claim 9 wherein said step of retrieving said first agreement information comprises displaying to said first entity at least two products associated with those agreements identifying said first entity as said buyer, and determining said first agreement information based upon the product selected by an entity of said class.
 12. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of storing a description of said product.
 13. (previously presented) The method of claim 12 wherein said description comprises an image, a textual description, or an image and a textual description.
 14. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:
 - (a) said first entity requesting the product from said second entity and storing said request,
 - (b) storing a request for said product by said second entity to said third entity based on the second agreement information.
 15. (previously presented) The method of claim 14 further comprising notifying said third entity of said request.
 16. (previously presented) The method of claim 14 wherein said requests includes the quantity of said product.

17. (previously presented) The method of claim 14 wherein said requests include the shipping destination or destinations of said product.

18. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said step of retrieving said second agreement information comprises searching for agreements wherein the buyer of the agreement identifies the seller of said first agreement and the product of the agreement identifies the product of said first agreement.

19. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of storing additional agreements associated with said product; repeating said step of retrieving said second agreement by recursively assuming that some of the values of said first agreement are equal to the values of said second agreement.

20. (currently amended) The method of claim 19 wherein said step of repeating terminates when there is no agreement identifying the seller of said second agreement as a buyer of the same product in another agreement.

21. (currently amended) A method of providing information about a product including typesetting comprising:

(a) storing data representing a product available from a mid-level entity to a class of customers in a computer accessible memory, said product including typesetting;

(b) storing data, in a computer-accessible memory, representing an agreement by a top-level member to provide said product to said mid-level member;

(c) receiving a customer request from a customer of said class of customers for said product, said customer request including typesetting information describing said typesetting;

(d) storing said customer request in a said computer accessible memory;

(e) causing a computer processor to retrieve said agreement from said computer-accessible memory based on the identity of said product and the identity of said mid-level member

associated with said customer request, wherein the agreement identifies the mid-level member as the recipient of the product provided by the top-level member;

(f) ~~said processor~~ using processing the retrieved agreement to generate a second request that said top-level member provide said product to said mid-level member, said second request identifying said typesetting information;

(g) transmitting said second request to said top level member.

22. (previously presented) The method of claim 21 wherein said class of customers comprises a single entity.

23. (previously presented) The method of claim 21 further comprising storing data representing an agreement by a third member to provide said product to said top-level member; retrieving said agreement by said third member based on the identity of said product and the identity of said top-level member.

24. (previously presented) The method of claim 23 wherein said typesetting information comprises an image.

25. (previously presented) The method of claim 24 further comprising the steps of receiving a plurality of requests from a plurality of customers of said class of customers, and wherein the image associated with one customer request is different from the image associated with another customer request.

26. (previously presented) The method of claim 25 wherein said step of storing said customer requests from said customers comprises storing said different images in the same file format.

27. (previously presented) The method of claim 26 further comprising the step of said top-level member retrieving said image.

28. (previously presented) The method of claim 27 further comprising the step of converting said image from said file format to a different file format before said step of said top-level member retrieving said image.

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29. (previously presented) The method of claim 25 wherein said step of storing said customer requests from said customers comprises storing said different images in different file formats.
30. (previously presented) The method of claim 29 wherein said different file formats correspond with file formats used by said members.
31. (previously presented) The method of claim 21 further comprising the step of manufacturing said product.
32. (previously presented) The method of claim 21 wherein said product is a stamp and said typesetting relates to the impression on said stamp.
33. (previously presented) The method of claim 21 wherein said requests identify said typesetting information by reference to information stored in a database.
34. (previously presented) The method of claim 21 wherein said step of receiving said customer request comprises receiving said customer request over a global telecommunications network.
35. (currently amended) A method of retrieving information comprising:
- (a) storing first agreement information and second agreement information in computer accessible memory, said agreement information identifying a buyer, a seller and a first product provided from said seller to said buyer,
 - (b) identifying said first agreement information which identifies ~~identifying~~ a first entity as said buyer, a second entity as said seller, and a first product as said product,
 - (c) identifying said second agreement information ~~identifying~~ which identifies said second entity as said buyer, a third entity as said seller, and a second product as said product,
 - (d) retrieving said first agreement information from said computer accessible memory,
 - (e) processing in a computer ~~processing~~ the first agreement information so as to retrieve said second agreement information based on the identity of said whether the computer-accessible memory indicates that the second entity is indicated as being both a seller in the first agreement information and a buyer in the second agreement information.

36. (currently amended) A system for storing information about buyers and sellers of products comprising:

(a) a database containing a plurality of agreement records, each said agreement record identifying a buyer, a seller and a product provided from said seller to said buyer,

(b) a processor for retrieving a second agreement record based on a first agreement record, whereby said buyer entity identified in said second agreement record is the same entity as the seller identified in said ^{first} ~~second~~ agreement record, and whereby said product identified in said second agreement record is related to said product identified in said first agreement record.

37. (previously presented) The system of claim 36 wherein database is stored at a central location.

38. (previously presented) The system of claim 37 wherein said database is stored in a single server.

39. (currently amended) A system for storing information about agreements between buyers and sellers, said system maintained by an administrator, said system comprising:

(a) data stored in a database representing an agreement by a middle entity to provide a product to a bottom entity in exchange for compensation and an agreement by a top entity to provide a related product to said middle entity in exchange for compensation, none of said entities being said administrator, and

(b) a processor for utilizing said data to process a request for said product from said bottom entity to said middle entity such that said request generates a request for said product from said middle entity to said top entity based on the middle entity being identified as the buyer in one of the stored agreements and the seller in the other stored agreement.

40. (previously presented) The system of claim 39 wherein said data further comprises another agreement by another entity to provide said product to said top entity.

41. (currently amended) A method of retrieving information relating to a request for personalized products, said method comprising:

(a) storing, in computer-accessible memory, an agreement by a second entity to provide a product to a first entity,

(b) storing, in computer-accessible memory, an agreement by a third entity to provide said product to said second entity,

(c) requesting by said first entity ~~requesting~~ said product from said second entity such that the request includes modifying the product in accordance with personalization information provided by said first entity, said personalization information being particular to said first entity, and

(d) causing a computer processor to generate a request for said product from said second entity to the third entity, wherein the processor determines whether the second entity is common to the stored agreements, and wherein the processor includes the personalization information in the request from said second entity to said third entity.

42. (previously presented) The method of wherein said personalization information comprises an image.

43. (currently amended) A method of selling products over the world-wide web, said method comprising:

(a) providing a database centrally storing agreements between a plurality of members to sell a product;

(b) sending a web page from a first member to a customer, said web page identifying a product that is the subject of one of said agreements of said database;

(c) receiving a request for said product from said customer, said request including an image provided by said customer;

(d) generating a first purchase order from said first member to a second member based on a second agreement stored in said database, said purchase order including said image, and

(e) generating, with a computer processor, a second purchase order from said second member to a third member based on the processor's determination of whether a third agreement is stored in the database such that the second member is indicated as a purchaser of the product from the third member said purchase order including said image.

44. (previously presented) The method of claim 43 further comprising the step of said members storing said agreements by sending information relating to such agreement to said database.

45. (previously presented) The method of claim 43 wherein said product comprises a stamp having an impression representing said image.

46. (previously presented) The method of claim 43 wherein said product comprises a printed item or sign containing said image.

In the Claims

1. (currently amended) A method of retrieving product distribution information comprising:

(a) storing a plurality of agreements ~~from~~ in computer-accessible memory where each agreement identifies a buyer, a seller and a product to be provided from said seller to said buyer,

(b) retrieving a first agreement from said computer-accessible memory, wherein the first agreement comprises information that identifies a first entity as said buyer, a second entity as said seller, and a first product as said product,

(c) processing the information stored retrieved for the first agreement with a computer processor, wherein the processor determines whether a second agreement stored in the computer-accessible memory identifies the ~~seller~~ second entity 2 in said first agreement as a buyer in said the second agreement, and determines whether the product in the second agreement relates to the ~~product~~ first product 1 in the first agreement, and returns the identity of the second agreement depending on the result, and

(d) generating a product order pursuant to the identified second agreement.

2. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of storing a third agreement identifying the seller in the second agreement as a buyer in the third agreement, and where the product in the third agreement is related to the product in the second agreement.

3. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein said product is a stamp.

4. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the product in the first agreement is a first product, the product in the second agreement is a second ~~product~~ the product, and the first and second products are related if the first product is a part or all of a second product.

5. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein said product is a service or a product and a service.

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6. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said steps of storing agreement information further comprises storing the compensation which seller agrees to accept for said product from said buyer.
7. (previously presented) The method of claim 6 wherein said compensation is the price of the product.
8. (previously presented) The method of claim 7 wherein said compensation is a commission.
9. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein said first entity is a class of entities.
10. (previously presented) The method of claim 9 wherein said class is the general public.
11. (currently amended) The method of claim 9 wherein said step of retrieving said first agreement information comprises displaying to said first entity at least two products associated with those agreements identifying said first entity as said buyer, and determining said first agreement information based upon the product selected by an entity of said class.
12. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of storing a description of said product.
13. (previously presented) The method of claim 12 wherein said description comprises an image, a textual description, or an image and a textual description.
14. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:
- (a) said first entity requesting the product from said second entity and storing said request,
 - (b) storing a request for said product by said second entity to said third entity based on the second agreement information.
15. (previously presented) The method of claim 14 further comprising notifying said third entity of said request.
16. (previously presented) The method of claim 14 wherein said requests includes the quantity of said product.

17. (previously presented) The method of claim 14 wherein said requests include the shipping destination or destinations of said product.

18. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said step of ~~retrieving said second~~ ^{processing} ~~agreement information~~ comprises searching for agreements wherein the buyer of the agreement identifies the ~~seller of said first agreement~~ ^{second entity} and the product of the agreement identifies the product of said first agreement.

19. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of storing additional agreements associated with said product; repeating said step of retrieving said second agreement by recursively assuming that some of the values of said first agreement are equal to the values of said second agreement.

20. (currently amended) The method of claim 19 wherein said step of repeating terminates when there is no agreement identifying the seller of said second agreement as a buyer of the same product in another agreement.

21. (currently amended) A method of providing information about a product including typesetting comprising:

(a) storing data representing a product available from a mid-level entity to a class of customers in a computer accessible memory, said product including typesetting;

(b) storing data, in a computer-accessible memory, representing an agreement by a top-level member to provide said product to said mid-level member;

(c) receiving a customer request from a customer of said class of customers for said product, said customer request including typesetting information describing said typesetting;

(d) storing said customer request in a said computer accessible memory;

(e) causing a computer processor to retrieve said agreement from said computer-accessible memory based on the identity of said product and the identity of said mid-level member

associated with said customer request, wherein the agreement identifies the mid-level member as the recipient of the product provided by the top-level member;

(f) ~~said processor~~ using processing the retrieved agreement to generate a second request that said top-level member provide said product to said mid-level member, said second request identifying said typesetting information;

(g) transmitting said second request to said top level member.

22. (previously presented) The method of claim 21 wherein said class of customers comprises a single entity.

23. (previously presented) The method of claim 21 further comprising storing data representing an agreement by a third member to provide said product to said top-level member; retrieving said agreement by said third member based on the identity of said product and the identity of said top-level member.

24. (previously presented) The method of claim 23 wherein said typesetting information comprises an image.

25. (previously presented) The method of claim 24 further comprising the steps of receiving a plurality of requests from a plurality of customers of said class of customers, and wherein the image associated with one customer request is different from the image associated with another customer request.

26. (previously presented) The method of claim 25 wherein said step of storing said customer requests from said customers comprises storing said different images in the same file format.

27. (previously presented) The method of claim 26 further comprising the step of said top-level member retrieving said image.

28. (previously presented) The method of claim 27 further comprising the step of converting said image from said file format to a different file format before said step of said top-level member retrieving said image.

29. (previously presented) The method of claim 25 wherein said step of storing said customer requests from said customers comprises storing said different images in different file formats.
30. (previously presented) The method of claim 29 wherein said different file formats correspond with file formats used by said members.
31. (previously presented) The method of claim 21 further comprising the step of manufacturing said product.
32. (previously presented) The method of claim 21 wherein said product is a stamp and said typesetting relates to the impression on said stamp.
33. (previously presented) The method of claim 21 wherein said requests identify said typesetting information by reference to information stored in a database.
34. (previously presented) The method of claim 21 wherein said step of receiving said customer request comprises receiving said customer request over a global telecommunications network.
35. (currently amended) A method of retrieving information comprising:
- (a) storing first agreement information and second agreement information in computer accessible memory, said agreement information identifying a buyer, a seller and a first product provided from said seller to said buyer,
 - (b) identifying said first agreement information which identifies ~~identifying~~ a first entity as said buyer, a second entity as said seller, and a first product as said product,
 - (c) identifying said second agreement information identifying which identifies said second entity as said buyer, a third entity as said seller, and a second product as said product,
 - (d) retrieving said first agreement information from said computer accessible memory,
 - (e) processing in a computer ~~processing~~ the first agreement information so as to retrieve said second agreement information based on ~~the identity of said~~ ^{whether} the computer-accessible memory indicates that the second entity is indicated as being both a seller in the first agreement information and a buyer in the second agreement information.

36. (currently amended) A system for storing information about buyers and sellers of products comprising:

(a) a database containing a plurality of agreement records, each said agreement record identifying a buyer, a seller and a product provided from said seller to said buyer,

(b) a processor for retrieving a second agreement record based on a first agreement record, whereby said buyer ~~entity~~ ^{first} identified in said second agreement record is the same entity as the seller identified in said ~~second~~ ^{first} agreement record, and whereby said product identified in said second agreement record is related to said product identified in said first agreement record.

37. (previously presented) The system of claim 36 wherein ^{the} database is stored at a central location.

38. (previously presented) The system of claim 37 wherein said database is stored in a single server.

39. (currently amended) A system for storing information about agreements between buyers and sellers, said system maintained by an administrator, said system comprising:

(a) data ^{computer accessible memory} stored in a ~~database~~ representing an agreement by a middle entity to provide a product to a bottom entity in exchange for compensation and an agreement by a top entity to provide a related product to said middle entity in exchange for compensation, none of said entities being said administrator, and

(b) a processor for utilizing said data to process a request for said product from said bottom entity to said middle entity such that said request generates a request for said product from said middle entity to said top entity based on the middle entity being identified as the buyer in one of the stored agreements and the seller in the other stored agreement.

40. (previously presented) The system of claim 39 wherein said data further comprises another agreement by another entity to provide said product to said top entity.

41. (currently amended) A method of retrieving information relating to a request for personalized products, said method comprising:

(a) storing, in computer-accessible memory, an agreement by a second entity to provide a product to a first entity,

(b) storing, in computer-accessible memory, an agreement by a third entity to provide said product to said second entity,

(c) ~~requesting by said first entity requesting~~ said product from said second entity such that the request includes modifying the product in accordance with personalization information provided by said first entity, said personalization information being particular to said first entity, and

(d) causing a computer processor to generate a request for said product from said second entity to the third entity, wherein the processor determines whether the second entity is common to the stored agreements, and wherein the processor includes the personalization information in the request from said second entity to said third entity.

42. (previously presented) The method of wherein said personalization information comprises an image.

43. (currently amended) A method of selling products over the world-wide web, said method comprising:

(a) providing a database centrally storing agreements between a plurality of members to sell a product;

(b) sending a web page from a first member to a customer, said web page identifying a product that is the subject of one of said agreements of said database;

(c) receiving a request for said product from said customer, said request including an image provided by said customer;

(d) generating a first purchase order from said first member to a second member based on a second agreement stored in said database, said purchase order including said image, and

(e) generating, with a computer processor, a second purchase order from said second member to a third member based on the processor's determination of whether a third agreement is stored in the database such that the second member is indicated as a purchaser of the product from the third member, said purchase order including said image.

44. (previously presented) The method of claim 43 further comprising the step of said members storing said agreements by sending information relating to such agreement to said database.

45. (previously presented) The method of claim 43 wherein said product comprises a stamp having an impression representing said image.

46. (previously presented) The method of claim 43 wherein said product comprises a printed item or sign containing said image.

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